

# CU IN THE WOODS

*Clemson Extension Forestry and Wildlife Newsletter*



## Prime Time for Trapping Swine

By W. Cory Heaton

Now that winter has fully engulfed us, it is time to put a dent in the pig population. Winter is the time for trappers to remove large numbers of the hog population. The fall mast crops are gone. Residual agriculture stores have been depleted. Succulent spring growth is still a considerable distance in the future. Now is the time for trappers to capitalize on the lack of food resources.

So we have reached a period of limited food resources. This limitation should make it simple to draw, hold and prepare pigs for trapping. However, at this critical time, you must be strategic with each and every pig control effort you make. Trapping during the winter is most advantageous due to the lack of food resources. It is easy to succeed when you can provide the primary food source. However, it is also at this time that many managers see the same opportunity. Landowners must coordinate pig control efforts so that a single bait site is available to the sounder. This can be extremely difficult on smaller properties where multiple neighbors are also attempting to trap pigs. In these scenarios, we must work closely with our neighbors. Our pre-baiting and trapping efforts should not interfere with their efforts. If pigs can readily move from one bait pile to another, you cannot be the primary food source. Additionally, if you do not work together, you will not be as successful at removing large numbers of pigs from the properties. Always communicate with your neighbors, and trap sounder by sounder in a coordinated effort. Wait to start pre-baiting one site until the adjacent site concludes their trapping efforts. Going back and forth from property to property and sounder to sounder will allow you to maximize your success.

Being the primary food source is critical to pattern development. We need pigs to schedule their days around the food availability we provide. Once pigs have established their pattern on the bait site, we can catch them. We do not want to break this pattern until the pigs are trapped. Breaking this pattern is the worst-case scenario, and we may not get these pigs back on this pattern before spring. When we are pre-baiting, all other control efforts in that area must stop. A pack of hog dogs working thru the site may push the sounder way out of the area. Likewise, shots fired at a group of hogs crossing a field or road may break the pattern. A night hunter shooting a couple of pigs in the trap area can break the pattern. Remember when you are trapping or preparing to trap, NO other control activities should be going on. In a successful program, the pattern is only broken when the gate drops and the sounder is trapped.

Landowners spend millions of dollars each year battling wild pigs. Efforts continue each year, as does the total expense of management. Work closely with your neighbors. Communicate with each other. Help each other. Plan, prepare, and execute your management efforts in a strategic manner so that you get your money's worth.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Pine Health Workshop for Professionals

April 21st

Zoom Webinar

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/pine-health-workshop-tickets-271095061627>

CFE and Pesticide Credits Available

Contact Parker Johnson for more information- [pdjohns@clermson.edu](mailto:pdjohns@clermson.edu)

### Chainsaw Safety and Training

April 30th

Coastal REC- Charleston

<https://tinyurl.com/SCWOWChainsaw2022>

Contact Janet Steele for more information- [jmwatt@clermson.edu](mailto:jmwatt@clermson.edu)

### Invasive Plant Management Workshops

May 4th- Pee Dee REC- Florence

June 7th- Outdoor Lab- Clemson

Contact Janet Steele for more information- [jmwatt@clermson.edu](mailto:jmwatt@clermson.edu)

### Women Owning Woodlands Workshop

In person introductory workshop coming soon. Contact Janet Steele for more information- [jmwatt@clermson.edu](mailto:jmwatt@clermson.edu)

### Joint Meeting

May 14th-

Orangeburg-Calhoun Forest Landowner

Association and Columbia Chapter of SC

Audubon tour at Wannamaker Preserve in

Calhoun County 9 a.m. to Noon. Contact

Janet Steele for more information- [jmwatt@clermson.edu](mailto:jmwatt@clermson.edu)

### CFE Opportunities:

You can find a list of current CFE opportunities at this website:

[https://www.clemson.edu/extension/forestry/continuing\\_education/index.html](https://www.clemson.edu/extension/forestry/continuing_education/index.html)

### More Events:

You can find a list of more events at this website:

<https://www.clemson.edu/extension/forestry/events.html>

**Check out our blog page for past articles and other great forestry and wildlife information- [blogs.clemson.edu/fnr](https://blogs.clemson.edu/fnr)**

# Preparing for Purple Martins

By Parker Johnson

Being the largest swallow in North America, Purple Martins have always been an extremely popular bird among homeowners and birding enthusiasts. Native Americans would attract them by hollowing out gourds and hanging them for the purple martins to nest in. Nowadays, homeowners often spend a lot of their time and resources trying to attract these beautiful birds. Still, this practice is a lot older than you think.



Purple martin (*Progne subis*). Vern Wilkins, Indiana University, Bugwood.org

Martins normally show up in the southern part of South Carolina in mid-to-late February; some folks even consider their arrival as the “true start of Spring.” Older males generally arrive earlier, often seeking their old nesting areas, while the late-arriving younger males seek new sites. After successfully nesting, purple martins migrate each year to South America (Brazil, Argentina, etc.), where they molt and grow new sets of feathers.

Instead of digging out their own nesting site, purple martins like to nest in cavities previously made by woodpeckers. This is called secondary cavity-nesting. Unfortunately, the introduction of exotic invasive species, such as the English house sparrow and starlings, has negatively impacted purple martins by creating

competition for nesting sites. To combat this, homeowners build multi-room bird condos made of wood, plastic, or aluminum; hollowed-out gourds are also used.

Materials to build these houses, or even the homes themselves, can be found on many websites. You may even want to try growing your own bottle gourds if that is your preference.

Below are some tips for creating a high-functioning purple martin nesting site:

- Locate your martin house at least 40 feet from trees and 30 feet from homes and other buildings.
- Purple martins like to nest in groups, so try using either a cluster of gourds or an “apartment-style” system for your build.
- Houses should be placed on poles 15-30 ft. tall.
- It is essential to have the ability to raise and lower the house to clean and inspect the compartments.
- Having a power line in the same area will allow them to gather and socialize.
- Placing the nesting sites near open water sources has proven to be more beneficial.
- Place the house where you can enjoy the view!

## County Forestry Associations

**Abbeville County Forest Landowners Association**  
Contact: Stephen Pohlman  
spohlma@clemsun.edu

**Edgefield County Forestry Association**  
Contact: Stephen Pohlman  
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**Aiken County Forestry Association**  
Contact: Janet Steele  
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**Greenville Forestry & Wildlife Society**  
Contact: Carolyn Dawson  
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**Anderson Forestry & Wildlife Association**  
Contact: Carolyn Dawson  
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**Greenwood County Forestry Association**  
Contact: Stephen Pohlman  
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**Calhoun-Orangeburg Forest Landowners Association**  
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jm watt@clemsun.edu

**Kershaw County Forest Landowner Association**  
Contact: Ryan Bean  
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**Chesterfield County Forestry Club**  
Contact: Ryan Bean  
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**Laurens County Forest Landowners Association**  
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**Darlington/Florence Landowners Association**  
Contact: TJ Savereno  
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**Lexington County Forestry Association**  
Contact: Janet Steele  
jm watt@clemsun.edu

**Lowcountry Landowners Association (Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, Jasper)**  
Contact: Janet Steele  
jm watt@clemsun.edu

**McCormick County Forestry Association**  
Contact: Stephen Pohlman  
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**Newberry County Forestry Association**  
Contact: Jeff Fellers  
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**Salkehatchie Forestry Association (Allendale, Bamberg and Barnwell)**  
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jm watt@clemsun.edu

**Saluda County Forestry Association**  
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spohlma@clemsun.edu

**Sumter County Forest Landowner Association**  
Contact: Ryan Bean  
rbean@clemsun.edu

**Tri-county Forestry Association (Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester)**  
Contact: Parker Johnson  
pjohans@clemsun.edu

**Williamsburg County Forest Landowners Association**  
Contact: Parker Johnson  
pjohans@clemsun.edu

**Contact the Association nearest to you to find out about upcoming meetings!**

# Tractors and Implements for Forest Landowners- Part 3: Implements and Attachments for Property Maintenance

By Stephen Pohlman

Our *Tractors and Implements for Forest Landowners* series's first and second articles covered tractor selection and ground contact implements (see links at the end). This third part will cover implements and attachments for property maintenance that the forest landowner should consider adding to their arsenal.

The first implements to discuss are box blades and scrape blades. The same principle applies to these as did our ground contact implement article. You will want to pay attention to steel thickness and construction, added gussets and bracing, and proper width based on the size of the tractor. Typically, you will want your box blades and scrape blades to be at least as wide as your rear tires, just for the simple fact of being able to leave a nice finished look behind you instead of tire tracks.



Adjustable scrape blade. Photo credit Steve Pohlman.

Box blades and scrape blades are often used for the same jobs; however, each has its intended purpose. A box blade is intended to keep things smooth/level. A scrape blade is intended to shape the ground. For example, if you plan to pull a ditch or crown a road, the scrape blade is a much better option. If you already have a surface that you are trying to maintain as smooth and level, then a box blade will be easier. Granted, you can do the same thing with a scrape blade. However, the scrape blade will roll material out one end, or both, during the process.



Box blade. Photo credit: Stephen Pohlman, Clemson University.

In contrast, a box blade will store the excess material inside the boxed area to later be used for depositing in other holes/depressions. Scrape blades can come in adjustable models that make it easy for the operator to change the angle and pitch of the blade without having to change the tractor's 3-pt hitch angles. Also, these adjustable models can be manual as well as hydraulic; however, the hydraulic versions will need to utilize the tractor's rear hydraulic accessory block ('remotes' as some call them).

Box blades and scrape blades are also great prescribed fire management equipment, provided you already have pre-existing fire breaks. Dragging a box blade or scrape blade on these maintained fire breaks will keep you from fracturing the soil surface with a plow. This allows you to keep a hard soil surface that prevents soil erosion and gives you the bare mineral soil that you need to avoid fire from walking across your fire break. The one flaw with this is that leaf/needle litter will quickly fill a box blade and a scrape blade, causing it to 'jump' over a rolled-up pile of this material. Thus, the build-up of leaf/needle litter will at some point need to be pushed off to the side out of the fire break while dragging the fire break clean.

Another tool for our tractor is the front end loader. Most tractors in the 20-40hp class seem to come with loaders, but this is not always the case. A front end loader is often included as dealers add them due to customer demand. A front end loader can be a valuable tool if you need to lift things, like implements on and off trailers or lime/fertilizer for food plots, just to name a few. A front end loader can also help walk a stuck tractor out as well, though painstakingly slow. Do keep in mind that many of today's front end loaders can take advantage of different front end attachments once you take the bucket off. Attachments such as grapple buckets, loader forks, rock buckets, 3-in-1 buckets, post hole diggers, etc., are most common for forest landowners. Some brands utilize the skid steer style attachment method, while others use their own proprietary system. Those with proprietary systems typically have a conversion kit or adaptor if the owner would rather have the skid steer style instead.

One of the front end loader attachments mentioned above, grapple buckets, makes my life much easier as a forest landowner. Coming from someone who has bent their fair share of grapple buckets, know that they make different ones: standard duty, medium duty, heavy duty, and extreme duty. Each one has thicker and more metal, shields, braces, etc. One major factor to consider when buying a grapple bucket is weight. Make sure that your loader capacity meets not only the weight of the grapple but also the weight of the material you'll be lifting. There are two kinds of grapple buckets, a brush grapple and a root grapple. By design, one is more clam-shaped, and the other is better at acting like loader forks for picking up and stacking things. Also, grapple buckets tend to have either one big grappling device or two separate clamping devices. The advantage of the two clamping devices is you will get a better bite/grasp on whatever you are trying to hold. Lastly, do know that your tractor will need to have a third function valve added for the front end loader to have the ability to open/close the grapple.



Grapple bucket. Photo credit: Stephen Pohlman, Clemson University.

The next article in this series will be about vegetation management. We will get into things like sprayers, rotary cutters, and tree cutters in that article.

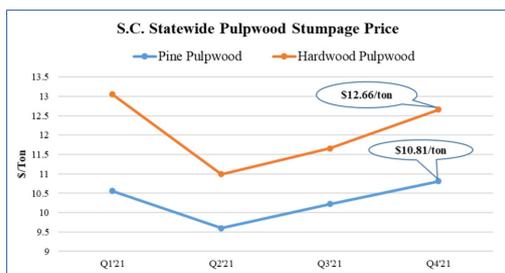
In case you missed them, here are the prior articles in this series:

Tractors and Implements for Forest Landowners- Part 1: Tractors- <https://blogs.clemson.edu/fnr/2021/10/21/tractors-for-forest-landowners/>

Tractors and Implements for Forest Landowners – Part 2: Ground Contact Implements- <https://blogs.clemson.edu/fnr/2021/12/13/tractors-and-implements-for-forest-landowners-part-2-ground-contact-implements/>

# South Carolina Stumpage Price Trends and Hardwood Market Fundamentals

By Puskar Khanal



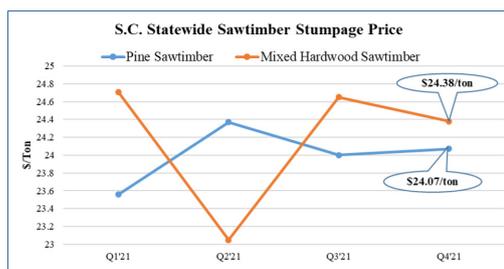
SC Statewide Pulpwood Stumpage Price for Q4'21.  
Puskar Khanal, Clemson University.

## Stumpage Price Trends in South Carolina:

Statewide average pulpwood stumpage prices for both pine and

hardwood maintained their increasing trends in this quarter, indicating improvements in market fundamentals from COVID-related issues. On average, South Carolina statewide pine pulpwood prices were \$10.81/ton, while hardwood pulpwood rates were \$12.66/ton in the 4th quarter of 2021. The prices of pine and hardwood increased about 6% and 8%, respectively, over the rates observed in the previous quarter.

Statewide pine sawtimber stumpage prices observed a slight increase (less than a percentage), while the mixed hardwood sawtimber stumpage had a slight decline in prices (about 1%) in this quarter compared to the prices in the last quarter. On average, the South Carolina statewide pine sawtimber stumpage prices



SC Statewide Sawtimber Stumpage Price for Q4'21.  
Puskar Khanal, Clemson University.

were \$24.07/ton, and mixed hardwood stumpage prices were \$24.38/ton in the 4th quarter of 2021. Hardwood prices were marginally better than the pine sawtimber prices (\$24.38/ton vs. \$24.07/ton) in this quarter, but the difference in price between these product categories was less than a dollar per ton, which may not be very encouraging for many landowners with hardwood trees. For the year 2021 (considering all four quarters), hardwood prices observed greater volatility than the pine sawtimber prices. In fact, mixed hardwood sawtimber prices have been consistently underperforming since this recent slide started from the 1st quarter of 2019. Current statewide average hardwood stumpage rates (\$24.38/ton) are about 13% lower than the statewide average rates for South Carolina in 2017 & 2018. On the contrary, current statewide pine sawtimber stumpage prices (\$24.07/ton) are about 4% less than the rates before 2019.

## Timber Market Fundamentals Hardwood Market Fundamentals:

Hardwood markets operate somewhat differently and fragmented manner than the softwood market. Unlike pine trees, the hardwood timber market is comprised of several trees species such as oaks, gums, maples, hickories,

walnut, etc. The products and by-products made from these tree species are of different types and qualities, such as furniture, flooring, veneer, and pallets. Each tree species and grade designation would differ in visual and physical attributes. Hardwoods are also used for making paper and paperboard items that require strength, such as bags and boxes, while pine trees are commonly used for making lumber, plywood, and paper. Demand and supply interaction in each final product category determines their stumpage rates. Hardwood demand market (consumption) has been broadly grouped into four categories:

- Furniture (wood household, upholstered household, and office).
- Construction and remodeling (flooring, millwork, kitchen cabinets, and other building products)
- Industrial (primarily pallets and crossies) and other products (staves, handles, and assorted miscellaneous products)
- International trade (exports and imports)

The market fundamentals might differ depending on tree species and product types. Prices for some hardwood species have recently surged, but others have seen a decline. Not all species have seen a decline (see link below). During COVID times, office furniture and remodeling may not be a priority, but house remodeling and building products demand seemed to increase. International export to Europe and Asia is an important factor affecting the southern hardwood market. The recent decline in hardwood prices for some species is also attributed to the weakness in these important markets.

## Softwood Market Fundamentals:

Softwoods are more commonly used for making construction lumber, plywood, and pulpwood. The bulk of softwood goes into the construction industry, so U.S. domestic housing market is one of the major drivers of its rates. In South Carolina, seven big pulpwood mills create a niche market for a strong pulpwood stumpage market as the wood basin is location-specific. Demand for southern sawtimber is strong as sawmills continue to fill their inventory, increase capacity, and take advantage of the recent surge in lumber rates. However, it's unlikely that higher lumber prices would result in an increase in stumpage rates because it's a buyer's market. Mills could buy from the southern oversupply of softwood to increase their capacity without paying more to the landowners.

## Resources:

Link: <https://forestry.ca.uky.edu/extension/helpful-resources/kentucky-forest-sector-economic-contribution/delivered-timber-prices>

Data credit: The sawtimber and pulpwood price data included in this newsletter are published with permission from TimberMart-South Athens, GA 30605 email: [tmart@timbermart-south.com](mailto:tmart@timbermart-south.com).

# Firewise Community Program Heats Up in South Carolina

By Carolyn Dawson

Fires have been a historical feature of the landscape in South Carolina. Our state averages 3,000 wildfires a year. Although news headlines tend to focus on wildfires threatening homes in the western US, the wildland-urban interface, or the area where homes and wildland meet, is not just a western issue.

In 2009, South Carolina lost 76 homes with 97 others damaged in one major wildfire covering over 19,000 acres. New residents moving into the area were unaware of the historically recurring wildfire history. Often, individual homes that are lost are located in the wildland-urban interface. Wildfires in these developed areas are hard to control due to lack of access and other issues. This issue continues to increase as development increases. Now lives and property are threatened as never before.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Firewise Communities program was developed to combat this issue. The Firewise program is co-sponsored by the USDA Forest Service, the US Department of the Interior, and the National Association of State Foresters. The Firewise Program provides homeowners and communities with simple and easy steps to help reduce a home's vulnerability by preparing ahead of a wildfire. These steps are rooted in principles based on solid fire science research into how homes ignite. The program is promoted by the SC Forestry Commission and Clemson Extension. Here are a few basic, simple steps to help protect your home:

- Make sure leaves and other debris are cleared from gutters, eaves, porches, and decks. This prevents embers from igniting your home. Leaf blowers can save you hours of time and labor!
- Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks.
- Remove flammable materials (firewood stacks, propane tanks, dry vegetation) within 30 feet of your home or other structures. Don't let it touch

your house, deck, or porch if it can catch fire.

- Prune any overhanging tree limbs or limbs touching your home's roof, deck, porches, driveway, or outbuildings.
- Inspect the chimney and install a spark-arresting mesh screen if needed. Ensure all vegetation is at least 10 feet from your chimney or stovepipe.
- Remove or prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows.
- Create a separation between trees, shrubs, and items that could catch fire, such as patio furniture, wood piles, swing sets, etc.
- Use metal wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to cover exterior attic vents and prevent sparks from entering the home.
- Enclose under-eave and soffit vents or screen with metal mesh to prevent embers from entering.
- Even though you don't want to keep a garden hose attached to a spigot during the winter, make sure to keep it accessible if needed.



Being Firewise can help save your property. Georgia Forestry Commission, Georgia Forestry Commission, Bugwood.org.

There is one last thing to be mindful of after taking these steps to reduce the chance of home ignition from direct flame, firebrand showers, and radiant heat. Always safely dispose of fireplace ashes. To date, approximately 32 neighborhoods have become Firewise Communities in South Carolina, and several more are in the process. Each community addresses its specific wildfire safety needs with the Firewise Communities/USA process. They work with partners including Clemson Extension, the SC Forestry Commission, and local fire departments to organize, plan, and conduct activities each year to make a difference in their wildfire safety. Grants may be offered to reimburse communities for their wildfire preparedness efforts.

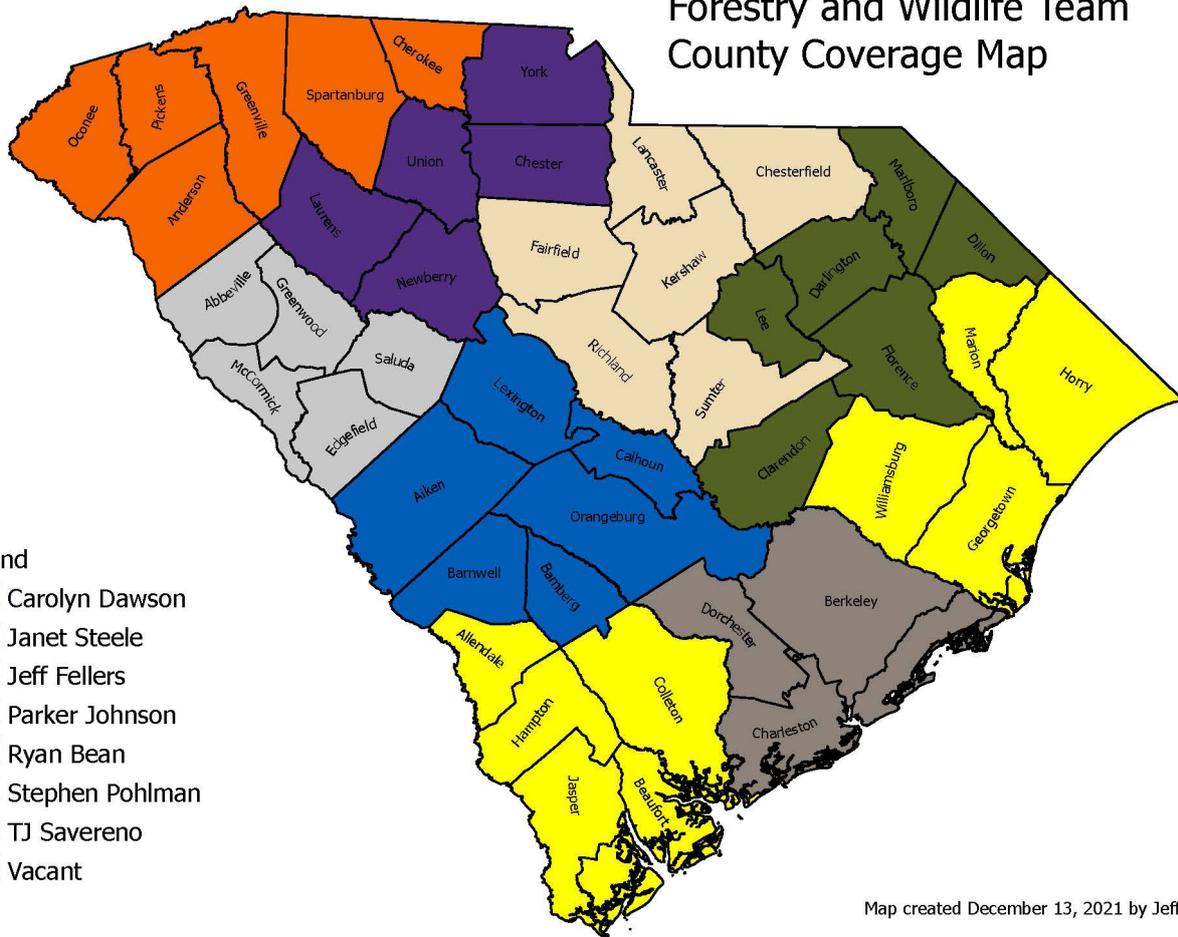
Forest fires don't have to be disasters. The Firewise Communities Program encourages homeowners to be responsible for preparing their homes from the risk of wildfire. Will you...your home be ready? Be Firewise!

 **Check Out Our YouTube Channel** [www.youtube.com/c/fnrclmson](http://www.youtube.com/c/fnrclmson)

Be sure to check out all of the great informational and how-to videos on our YouTube page.



## Forestry and Wildlife Team County Coverage Map



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Forestry, Cost Share Programs, Prescribed Fire, Soil Types  
Forestry, Conservation, Forest Health, Firewise  
Forestry, Geographic Information Systems  
Wildlife Management  
Forestry, Biomass, and Bioenergy  
Natural Resource Education, 4-H  
Forestry, Thinning, Hardwood Valuation, Food Plots  
Wildlife Management, Native Vegetation, Invasive Species  
Forestry and Wildlife, Ownership Transition, Longleaf Pine Management

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Newsletters are archived online at:  
<https://www.clemson.edu/extension/forestry/newsletter/index.html>

Newsletter edited by Jaime Pohlman and reviewed by Janet Steele

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